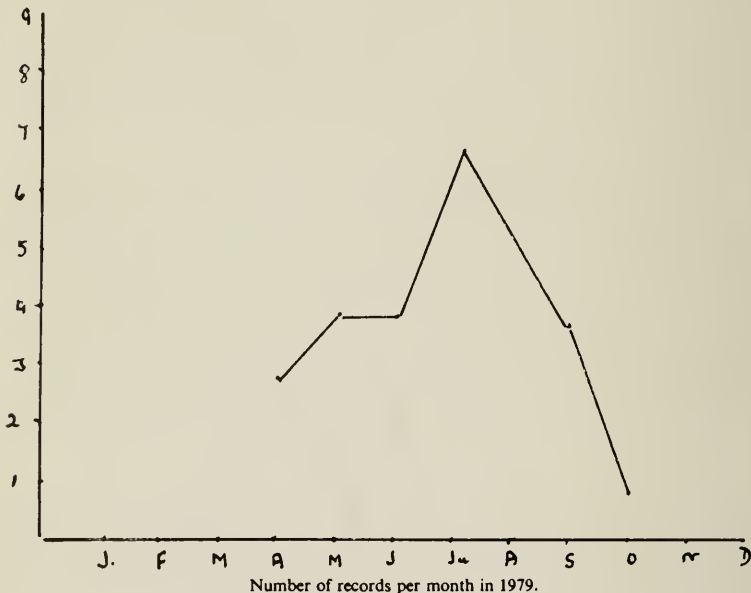


DANAUS CHRYSIPPUS L. REVISITING MALTA

By ANTHONY VALLETTA F.R.E.S.*

After a lapse of 26 years this migratory butterfly was taken again in Malta by Guido Bonett on the 14th October 1978; but whilst in 1952 and in 1923 the var. *alcippus* Cram. was taken, this time it was the type (See *Ento.Rec.* 91: 142-143). The following year 1979 will, however, be long remembered as the year of the *D.chrysippus*, as no less than 23 times this butterfly was seen flying about in different localities of the islands and on different dates.

It is a well known fact that this butterfly is a strong and fast flier and that it has a longer span of life than most of the butterflies; thus it does not mean that because it was seen 23 times there were that many butterflies flying about; there could have been many more which were not recorded or fewer. The Maltese Islands being so small, only 122 sq. miles, the same specimen could have been seen and recorded several times in different localities.



There is a span of 167 days from the first one seen on the 5th April and the last one on the 19th October; only three specimens were taken, all males, two in September taken on the 12th and 29th at Wied Blandun, Paola, and Swieqi, St. Julian's respectively; the third was taken on 2nd September at Wied Iz-Zurrieq, and 11 more were recorded after the last taking, which means that several specimens were present.

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During this period, several migrations of *Cynthia cardui* took place, and it is possible that the *chrysippus* had joined the exodus, possibly from Libya, N. Africa, as the prevailing wind was South, South West.

In 1980 we had only one record, when two specimens, a male and a female flying together were taken by me on the 15th October at 10.10 a.m. at Wardija, St. Paul's Bay; during that week thousands of *C. cardui* were again on migration.

All these records could not be available were it not for the interest taken by my brother-of-the-net, Guido Bonett, who besides recording several himself (when the net was not available), has several contacts with ornithologists, who are quite often out in the country either ringing or watching the migratory birds. My thanks also go to all my other friends who rang me up whenever they came across this rare butterfly, and especially to Mr. N. A. McGregory, Mr. S. Healy and Mr. P. Sammut, who took the trouble to call on me to show me their finds.

When one considers that this butterfly has visited the islands for three consecutive years, there may be the hope of its becoming a regular migrant. Or possibly, of its finding a plant to its liking to breed on the islands, as it has done in the Canaries and lately near Alicante in Spain, where it is said it may be feeding on cotton. We shall wait and see!

*Records of Danaus chrysippus Lin. in the Maltese Islands
in 1979.*

<i>Date</i>	<i>Locality</i>	<i>Corresponding number on map</i>
5.4.1979	Hal-Farrug	1
6.4	Wied Il-Kbir	2
8.4	Wied Rini	3
2.5	Ghajn Barrani, Gozo	4
5.5	Bugibba	4a
12.5	Ghajn Rihana	5
12.5	Wied Blandun	6
16.6	Ramla l-Hamra, Gozo	7
20.6	M'Skala	8
21.6	Bahar ic-Caghaq	9
29.6	Swieqi	10
4.7	Bidnija	11
6.7	Gozo Channel	12
6.7	Ta'Qali	13
6.7	Bugibba	14
10.7	Manoel Island	15
22.7	Comino	16
24.7	Mistra	17
2.9	Wied iz-Zurrieq	18
12.9	Marina, Marsa	19
29.9	Ghadira	20
30.9	Ghadira	21
19.10	Ghadira	22



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